



**BLACKBURN WITH
DARWEN BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

**STANDING ADVISORY
COUNCIL**

**ON RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION (SACRE)**

The legal basis of RE in the curriculum of maintained schools

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum comprising Religious Education (RE), sex education and the National Curriculum. This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The key document in determining the teaching of RE in community schools is the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the Local Authority (LA) concerned. Schools designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses in accordance with their Trust Deeds. LAs must, however, ensure that the agreed syllabus for their area is consistent with Section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996, which the requirement to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

Schools are not obliged to provide RE to pupils who are under compulsory school age (section 80(2)(a) of the Education Act 2002), although there are many instances of good practice where RE is taught to these pupils. Separate legislative provision on RE is made for maintained special schools. Regulations covering maintained special schools require them to ensure state that, as far as practicable, these pupils should receive RE.

The role and responsibility of the Local Authority

In accordance with Section 11 of the Education Reform Act 1988 (as amended by Section 255 of the Education Act 1993) Blackburn with Darwen LA must:

1. establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE) and appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:
Committee A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
Committee B: the Church of England
Committee C: teacher associations and school representatives
Committee D: the Local Authority
Where all committees are in agreement, SACRE may also co-opt members
2. establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus for Religious Education adopted by the Local Authority. This may have common membership with the SACRE but is a separate entity and must therefore be separately convened
3. institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review
4. appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC

5. ensure that the composition of Committee A on both SACRE and on an ASC is broadly representative of the proportionate strengths of the denominations and religions in the area. The statutory provisions recognise that there will be occasions when the interest of efficiency overrides the requirement for directly proportionate representation
6. take all reasonable steps when appointing a person to be a member of a group on a SACRE or a committee of an ASC to represent any religion, denomination or association, to ensure the person appointed is representative of the religion, denomination or associations in question
7. An LA should fund and support a SACRE and an ASC satisfactorily in line with the duty to constitute or convene each of these bodies and to enable them to be effective in carrying out their functions.

Blackburn with Darwen SACRE has been established by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council acting as the Local Education Authority.

Membership

1. The Members of the SACRE appointed by the authority to represent the following groups:

Committee A – Christian denominations and other religions

(The groups and numbers should reflect data from the latest census. The numbers in brackets relate to the membership of SACRE in 2014)

Buddhist (1)
 Hindu (1)
 Muslim (5)
 British Jews (1)
 Sikh (2)
 Blackburn with Darwen Free Churches (3)
 Roman Catholic (1)

Committee B – The Church of England (2)

Committee C – Teacher Associations

NAS UWT
 NEU
 NAHT
 ASCL
 RE Networks and SIG groups (Primary, Secondary, Special/Alternative Provision)

Committee D – The Local Authority (6)

2. Committee D shall be subject to the proportionality requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
3. No Member appointed to the Cabinet/Executive Board shall be appointed to the SACRE.
4. The SACRE shall be appointed by the Council.
5. Members of the SACRE shall serve from the date of their appointment for a term of four years or until their successors are appointed by the authority. They shall be eligible for reappointment after each term for a further term by consultation, if necessary, with the group which they represent. This shall also apply to any co-opted members who may be appointed.
6. Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE and fails to give their apologies s/he, shall cease to be a member of the SACRE and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative provided that:

(a) the Clerk to the SACRE has advised the member in writing of the provision of this clause following the second missed meeting and at least 10 working days before the third meeting.

(b) SACRE does not decide to disapply this rule for reasons of extenuating circumstances.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. In accordance with Section 11 of the Education Reform Act 1988 (as amended by Section 255 of the Education Act 1993) to advise the Council on such matters connected with religious worship in schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to it or as it may see fit. To advise, in particular, on:
 - a. methods of teaching,
 - b. the choice of materials
 - c. the provision of training for teachers
 - d. monitoring the provision for RE
 - e. provision of support and advice on RE
2. Consider applications made by Headteachers of community schools seeking a determination with regard to collective worship. Headteachers making an application must demonstrate that broadly Christian acts of worship are inappropriate to the family backgrounds, ages or aptitudes of the pupils and show that consultation has taken place with governors and parents/carers. Determinations end after 5 years unless they are renewed by SACRE. All determinations will be reviewed by SACRE at least every 5 Years.

SACRE will also

- a. monitor the provision for collective worship in schools
- b. provide support and advice on collective worship to schools.

3. The SACRE shall each year publish a report on its proceedings and those of its representative groups. The report will specify any matters on which the SACRE has given advice to the authority and the reasons for offering that advice.
4. The SACRE shall take any action assigned to it by the local authority in relation to the consideration and disposal of any complaint concerning worship or religious education in compliance with Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988.
5. On any question to be decided by SACRE only the representative committees are entitled to vote. Each of the four committees has a single vote.
6. Each committee, other than committee D, has the right to require a review of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education currently adopted by the authority. Each representative committee has a single vote on the question of whether to require such a review.